

From: Carrie Vibert July 9, 2012 11:18:07 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 06/12/2012 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
JUNE 12, 2012
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: John Carroll, William Gardner, Kevin E. Gray, Charles Stephenson, Rita Bond, and John Stewart. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, Janis Prifti, Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Carroll to serve for Commissioner Naccarato who joined the meeting in progress.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a) Application #12-15 of Philip Doyle of LADA, P.C., Agent for Cobb School Montessori, Inc., Owner, for a Site Plan Amendment for a gym and multi-purpose space on the property located at 112 Sand Hill Road (Map E14, Block 131, Lot 16), Zone R-40.

Philip Doyle of LADA, P.C. described the Site Plan layout with the gym currently in the end building being renovated for classrooms being moved up from the basement. He said they are replacing the gym function and building on the edge of the upper parking lot where the fence line currently bisects the building. He provided a picture of the elevations. He said a connector will be used to connect the gym to the main building and tie in the classrooms; the gym does not touch the existing building because of a recently installed sewer connection to Bushy Hill that was requested by the Town Engineer. He said around the building the planting plan calls for replacing some plants and trees with the main feature being a rain garden on the Bushy Hill side of the building using storm water from the roof which infiltrates and ties into an existing drainage system. He

said they have designed the rain garden for learning purposes with no toxic plants.

Mr. Doyle stated they are asking to put 5 parking spaces in reserve; on a normal day the maximum is 485; parking is shared by an agreement between Ethel Walker and the Cobb School when there are events. He said Rick Schoenhardt's black/white design provides elevations using color to show what they are trying to achieve. He said currently the building is off-white with tan trim; they will probably change to tan for the field of the building and white as trim. He stated they would like the current gym to be more dynamic and propose adding color to the siding using EIFS to get some movement on the side of the building rather than just siding. He said except for the bottom 3-4 feet of wainscoting, it will be EIFS; the siding is hardy plank clapboard. Regarding scale, he said the plan shows the existing ridge height for the gym at 29 feet but the new building looks to be about 2 feet taller.

Mr. Doyle said they are moving 2 light fixtures toward the center of the parking lot with no change in lighting impact; no poles are being added and all fixtures are down lights about 12 feet tall. He said they are planting a clump of Birch trees and some Red Oaks replacing sugar maple; the rain garden will be mostly grasses, shrubs, and 100-150 plants that do well in wet environments with water funneled to a depression. Regarding the driveway west of the building near the rain garden, he said it is on the setback line and the building is 53-54 feet off the property line; the driveway is for emergency access from Bushy Hill and the parking lot and they propose bituminous paving back to the fence line with the existing fence moved out. Regarding the building's elevation in relation to Bushy Hill, he perceives it as flat with the gym at 352 and Bushy Hill at 354 at a distance of about 200 feet.

Mr. Doyle said access to the rain garden is not planned for the public because they want to keep the smaller kids from wandering. Regarding mechanical equipment, he said it will be in 2 locations screened with plants, shrubs and small trees as shown in the rendering. He said power is located underground with the main electrical feed coming in behind the building and Spruce tree where it ties in. He confirmed entry is through the building, except for a double door entrance in the connector for parents to walk from the parking lot through the connector through a door to the play area. He said there will be 4-foot wide path to move equipment in with no additional signage planned currently. He agreed the building in the corner is not in the best location, but has to be there because of the sanitary sewer location. Regarding painting the material, he said there is clapboard and the Ethos is like stucco with color applied in the mixture.

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion of referral to the Zoning Commission that the Design Review Board finds this Application substantially consistent with the guidelines for community design...as presented on Architecture Plan A-2 elevations dated 5/15/12 and A-3 elevations dated 5/15/12; Planting Plan L-7 dated 5/15/12; and Overall Site Plan and Erosion Control Plan L-02 dated 5/17/12. Commissioner Carroll seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

b) Application #12-20 of Lenny Montemerlo, Agent for Dorset Crossing, LLC, Owner, for a Sign Permit for 12 signs on the property located at 1507 & 1515 Hopmeadow Street, Zone PAD.

Mr. Montemerlo presented Dorset Crossing's formal Application for a Sign Permit for 12 signs. He said following the recent informal presentation, they incorporated the Board's suggestions into this revised plan, including elimination of 2 proposed Keystone logo signs; they combined the free standing Urgent Care sign originally proposed for Dorset Drive with the directional sign; they added landscaping for the monument sign and 3 directional signs and have proposed signs for the gable ends (page 3).

Mr. Montemerlo said the 1st page of the handout summarized all signs proposed and he discussed each with the Board; 70 watt metal halide lighting (lower left corner of page) used to light the signs will be hidden by landscaping. He stated there are now 3 tenants with 1 future; tenant ID signs are type 3; 3A and 3B share a building entrance at the east end of the building - 3A in front is New England Urgent Care; 3B occupying the center section of the building is for Saint Francis Care; 3C is a 1200 sq. ft. space for the Keystone Companies; and the west end is for a future tenant with a 4th sign completes a balanced look across the front of the building. He said they have added the number 30 on the gable of each entry door. He stated 3 Type 5 signs will be used to help people coming off Rte. 10 to find their way; they are taking the free standing Urgent Care sign and making a drop box panel; a second sign will be located at the 3 driveways going into Phase I. He believes this revision captures all of the Boards inputs and submitted a signed Application to Mr. Peck.

Regarding questions on lighting, Mr. Montemerlo said the monument sign and 3 gable end signs are lit and there is a light over the directional signs. He said the color of the signs are a black background with gold leaf letters. Commissioner Stewart complimented them on the entrance sign at the plinth and suggested increasing its value by having their landscape architect look at substituting for Junipers and Day Lilies more seasonal perennials and color to enhance the look and their investment in the stonework; he suggested moving away from the horizontalus and potential ratty look inherent in maintaining Junipers and use the color of perennials to focus on what is there. Mr. Montemerlo agreed this suggestion might be

advantageous and planned to discuss it further with project management.

Regarding the island plantings in the parking area, Mr. Montemerlo described the property line between Phase I of Dorset Crossing and Griffin Land as an unattractive area with damaged trees and they plan to have islands every 6 feet through the center with 18 foot tall trees. He said at the front exit, the Pine tree remains and 2 existing specimen trees, but 5 specimen trees were taken out by the October storm. He said they will put in three 4 1/2 inch caliper blight resistant Elms and two Oaks, some Pine, Rhododendrons, etc. He said for future pad sites 3, 4, 5 and 1, they will put in a binder course and curbs with grading and top soil and will hydro seed and mow into the sites. He said everything will be landscaped and green with no unsightly sites.

Commissioner Bond expressed concern that using too many Elms could make the landscaping vulnerable to being destroyed should disease come in and suggested using some native trees. Commissioner Stewart suggested using Elms only along the drive as neither Elms or Sugar Maples are good parking lot trees; Honey Locust is a good tree in the parking lot with small leaf drop decreasing lot maintenance; Stella D'Ora ? is not suggested as it can get stamped on and look ratty, except possibly in thicker islands; another advantage of perennials is that in winter more space is available for snow removal; a suggestion is to be site specific in selecting plant material. The Board reiterated these are suggestions.

Regarding Zoning's request for a photo of the metrics, Mr. Montemerlo said there are 4 lines on Dorset Crossing Drive provided by CL&P as indicated on the original submission package in a style similar to other Simsbury projects. Regarding a similar review at the parking level, Chairman Dahlquist requested a photo metric for the record. Mr. Peck believed it was reviewed with the previous plan and will confirm and advise the Board.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion this Application is substantially consistent with the intent and principles for community design and recommends approval as presented on 6/12/12. The 3 drawings presented by Keystone Companies, LLC, include Dorset Crossing Building #2, Drawing #1 Sign Schedule; Building Site Signage at the scale indicated, with the following condition in reference to signs that Mr. Barton indicated landscaping of low growing Junipers will be removed and replaced with perennials with the intent to maximize visibility of the stone wall and to not plant low growing junipers around any other signs on site. The Commission recommends planting a variety of trees on site.

Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Chairman Dahlquist noted the comments are recommendations, not part of the

approval, and are offered as professional advice. He thanked the Applicant for the completeness of the package, the presentation, and concern shown.

IV. INFORMAL PRESENTATION(s)

a) Informal discussion of special needs housing by Regan Development/ Dorset Crossing

Dave Zyacks of F.A. Hesketh & Associates, Larry Regan, and Tom Barton appeared for Dorset Crossing. Mr. Zyacks stated the special needs housing will be constructed on 2.15 acre Lot C off of "new Town road", off of Hopmeadow up to the roundabout. He said CL&P is currently expanding its substation and working on the site plan; they are waiting for CL&P's preliminary landscaping plans to integrate with their plan. He said the building will be 3 stories with a 16,000 sq. ft. footprint and 57 parking spaces. He stated they will return to discuss landscaping and other details. He said the lights will be a simple box and sidewalks are integral to the site. He said the building is balanced with the existing tree line with tree-covered Saxton Brook underneath and a large area of wetlands and open space.

Mr. Zyacks said an important area of the building is the outdoor space for tenants taking advantage of the land's nice private location. He said it is all ADA compatible, including grades, and using no ramps or railings. He said there will be a large outdoor patio with a garden slightly into the toe of the slope and walkways all around the building tying to the crosswalk at the door. He said this includes an ADA designed neighborhood raised garden area for special plants for residents. He added there will be a nice drop-off area in front of the building and 3-4 times the typical amount of ADA designated parking; 57 parking spaces will be incorporated into the Master Plan; the dumpster will be out of public view.

Mr. Zyacks described it as a simple site in a very nice setting with privacy where residents can look out over Dorset Crossing Drive because of the land rise. They will set the property line of Lot C at CL&P's right of way with no encroachment. He said at this point the schematic has no landscaping and they will return with the details. He said they imagine undertaking significant augmentation to screen the CL&P structure.

Mr. Zyacks stated they have met with the Fire Marshall who is assured trucks can enter easily and the building is all sprinklered. Regarding putting an additional terrace behind the area, he said it is not possible because the property line has a 5-6 foot tall berm, which nevertheless provides nice vegetation and a nice background for the patio.

Chairman Dahlquist restated that this is an informal discussion and the Board is offering comments.

Architect Tom Barton stated in the last few years he has worked with Mr. Regan on a number of these facilities with a unique purpose and special demands. He clarified the patio area needs to be close to the building because some people have limited mobility and want easy access to the area. He said the 3-story building is 52,000 sq. ft. with 1 and 2-bedroom units offering independent living usually for a couple where 1 member has MS. He said it is designed to meet a broad range of needs with some residents having severe physical issues where others do not. He said a goal is to make it very residential for a generally younger population than those in institutions. He stated it is an elevator-served building and a protected wood frame structure with a sprinkler system in conformance with Town codes. He said handicapped requirements for special needs will be exceeded. He said to break up the mass of the building, the roof form has been brought down, horizontal siding is used with a single look at the gable ends and at strategic locations throughout the building, dormers are varied, and 4 elevations are shown. Regarding how the building sits in the environment, Mr. Barton said they used traditional New England elements throughout, but not a literal interpretation - windows and trim are traditional but not classic as they felt that would not be appropriate for a building this size. Regarding the building's tall elevation facing and near to the street, he offered they may be able to bring it down to create more of a 2-story look and will take a look at available tools. It was suggested by the Board that landscaping with 3-4 inch caliper trees in this area could soften it. The Board complimented the Applicant on their efforts to make a large building look comfortable and attractive and suggested multi-seasonal plantings for interest and a pleasant residential environment. Mr. Barton stated they need a controlled entrance and common area. He said residents in the facilities developed so far are very happy.

Mr. Regan, the developer, said they have a similar building in Freehold with Mr. Barton providing the architectural design. He said it was the first MS facility and was done with similar financing from the State of New Jersey. He said residents are typically in their 20's and 30's and have previously been relegated to facilities with the elderly. He stated even though this population is independent, they still need some level of service with 30-40% in wheel chairs; they have automatic door openers and have researched the only other facility of this kind in Minnesota. He said they took the best ideas and put them into the Freehold facility and they are developing a second facility in Philadelphia for a non-profit. He said they are very excited about this work and comfortable with clientele from within the community and are working with the CT MS Society which has targeted over 6,000 people in the state, providing affordable, state-of-the-art green building that is community-driven. He said staff will have

rooms in the building for doctors, exercise, etc. but it will not be staffed 24/7 and is more residential.

V. DISCUSSION

a) Joint meeting with Zoning Commission

Chairman Dahlquist said he sent an email to members regarding procedural issues. He said the Zoning Commission meeting is next Monday and requested comments be sent to him to prepare a document. He added the Board may need to work on this at the 6/26 meeting in order to respond to Charter Revision language issue and time conclusions with the Zoning Commission in coordination with a revisit by the Board of Selectmen. He stated the need to conclude discussions before the end of the Charter Revision Commission issue to get back to the BOS. He said a couple of ideas are to look at Zoning Commission regulations and what they do and what DRB does and consider where there is an overlap and clear differences; can a very compact checklist be developed to quickly review projects with a summary of concerns at the end. Commissioner Gray noted ideas have been provided with no feedback from Zoning to date.

b) Comments on Town Center Design Guidelines

Mr. Peck noted that pages for the Design Guidelines are displayed on the meeting room wall and provided members with a handout. He was disappointed with the turnout when Nori Winters was in Town recently and requested receiving any comments in order for the project to be completed in early July.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

Regarding the approved 12 lot subdivision at 16 Sand Hill, Mr. Peck said they want to put a sign in front for "Croft Lane" similar to the "Powder Forest" sign integrated into the stone wall.

Regarding the Ethel Walker facility, Mr. Peck said they are adding an apartment above the restroom building.

The Commissioners expressed concern about when to have Applicants return for changes to approved projects. Mr. Peck indicated it is not black and white and suggested evaluating changes on a case-by-case basis as design elements can be difficult to determine in advance. The Commissioners

clarified if square footage doubled within the same footprint, they would want to see the Applicant again. The Commissioners agreed this topic should be on the next meeting agenda for discussion.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of May 22, 2012

The minutes were amended on Line 17 to change "Commissioner Drapelick was invited to participate fully in discussion." to "Chairman Dahlquist invited Commissioner Carroll to participate in the discussion."

Commissioner Carroll made a motion to approve the May 22, 2012, minutes as amended. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gray made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Kevin E. Gray, Secretary